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C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 001319

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EUR/SE AND PM

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/10/2015

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SUBJECT: GOT PROTESTS PORT VISIT BY US NAVY TO RHODES

REF: 2003 ANKARA 140

Classified By: Political-Military Counselor Tim Betts, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

1. (U) The Embassy received on March 8 a Diplomatic Note dated March 4 regarding a Jan. 22-25 port visit to the island of Rhodes by the US Navy ship The Sullivans-DDG 68 (DDG-Guided Missile Destroyer). Text is at para. 3.

2. (C) COMMENT: We believe this is the first formal protest by the GOT about a USN ship visit to Rhodes in almost two years (see reftel). The GOT position as described in the Diplomatic Note is consistent with Ankara's long-standing position that any activity by an official military body, including port visits, is a violation of the 1947 treaty. Turkish officials well understand our differences over the interpretation of the relevant provisions of the Paris Peace Treaty, yet periodically believe they must restate their position. END COMMENT.

3. (U) BEGIN TEXT OF MFA NOTE NO. 2005/DHGY/90426:

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey presents its compliments to the Embassy of the United States of America and has the honour to bring the following to the kind attention of the Embassy.

The Ministry has been informed that the US navy vessel, THE SULLIVAN-68, paid a visit to the Island of Rhodes between 22-25 January 2005.

The Ministry would like to emphasize that Rhodes and other Dodecanese islands have been placed under a permanent demilitarized status by the 1947 Paris Peace Treaty which excludes all forms of military presence and activities on the said islands including port visits by naval vessels.

Therefore, the Ministry requests the US Government to continue supporting the regime elaborated in the 1947 Paris Peace Treaty.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Embassy of the United States of America the assurances of its highest consideration.

Ankara, 4 March 2005

END TEXT.

EDELMAN